





ABBA THE ALBUM

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ABBA – The Album was first released in Sweden as Polar POLS 282 on December 12, 1977. Recording sessions began in May 1977 and continued until November 1977. The album was recorded at Marcus, Metronome and Glen studios in Stockholm, and Bohus Studio in Kungälv, Sweden.

◀ ABBA on stage during their 1977 tour.

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■ Golden girls and boys

Liner notes by Carl Magnus Palm

ABBA started recording their fifth LP, *ABBA – The Album*, on May 31, 1977. At this point, two and a half months had elapsed since they completed their highly successful tour of Europe and Australia. The tour had started in Oslo, Norway at the end of January and finished in Perth, Australia on March 12. In between, the group had performed before hundreds of thousands of people – the great majority of them in Australia, where ABBA-mania was in full rage.

In the Autumn of 1976, while ABBA were rehearsing for the tour, the group felt that they wanted to come up with a few specials for their show: something extra, that was more than just playing their hits and other popular songs. Björn and Benny, who had long been dreaming of writing a musical one day, grabbed this opportunity to make a minor attempt in this area.

What they came up with was a 20 minute “mini-musical”, entitled *The Girl With The Golden Hair*. The story centred around a girl who dreams of being a singer, leaves her small town to

embark on a successful career as an artist, but finds that she has been trapped by her own fame.

Four new songs were written specifically for the mini-musical: *Thank You For The Music*, *I Wonder (Departure)*, *I’m A Marionette* and *Get On The Carousel*. When the tour was over, the first three titles would be recorded during sessions for the new album. *Get On The Carousel*, however, was very much a “stage number” with long instrumental passages and a repetitive structure, so it was never attempted in the studio. Instead, a part of the tune was used for *Hole In Your Soul*, a brand new album track. *Thank You For The Music* was the first of the musical songs to be committed to tape. At this point, the song was arranged with a slight ragtime feel, and Agnetha found her vocal interpretation by imitating American singer Doris Day. The rest of the group contributed intricate backing vocals.

But after all this work, ABBA still didn’t feel that they had cap-

On Sunset Strip in Los Angeles, 1978. ►





tured *Thank You For The Music* correctly. They decided to start all over again. In July the group finally hit upon the arrangement and feel that were right for the song, and this recording was included on *ABBA – The Album*.

Meanwhile, the first version languished in the vaults for more than 17 years until it was rediscovered and released on the 1994 CD box set *Thank You For The Music*. It has been included as a bonus track on this CD.

Just before ABBA started recording *ABBA – The Album*, Björn, Benny and sound engineer Michael B. Tretow had been on a short trip to Los Angeles. The purpose of the visit was to check

the first one was provisionally called *A Bit Of Myself*. Stig Anderson, the master of the catchy song title, came up with the phrase *The Name Of The Game*. This became the new title of the song, although it was Björn who wrote the actual lyrics. The second US-inspired track was *Eagle*, where Björn's lyrics were coloured by the freedom spirit in the novel *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. By the time ABBA were finished with the songs, they had both been filtered through the group's European sensibilities, but it could be argued that the American roots shone through even on the finished record.

The Name Of The Game is also one of the few songs where Björn and Benny have authorized a sampling of an ABBA song.

"Björn found the title on a jogging•round"

out recording equipment for the new studio that ABBA were going to build in central Stockholm – it would take another year until the studio was ready for use.

But the trip proved inspirational in other respects as well. The West Coast music scene at the time was very much dominated by laidback groups like The Eagles and Fleetwood Mac. Both bands were already favourites for Björn and Benny, but spending time in the place where all that music was created turned out to have an immediate effect on their own creative process. As a direct result of the visit, two songs were written:

In 1996, hip hop band The Fugees wanted to use the bass synthesizer groove of the recording for their own track *Rumble In The Jungle*, recorded as the theme song for the movie *When We Were Kings*. Björn and Benny were amused that their Scandinavian recording could mean something for a hip hop act, and so they decided to make an exception to their otherwise strict "no sampling allowed" rule.

The Name Of The Game was the first single from *ABBA – The Album* – indeed, the first since the Arrival track *Knowing Me, Knowing You* eight months earlier. Like most other of the group's

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singles around this time it turned out to be a global Top 10 hit, spending five weeks at the top of the UK charts.

All in all, the sessions for *ABBA – The Album* were both hectic and stressful for the group. In the middle of working on the LP, they were still shooting scenes for their upcoming feature film, *ABBA – The Movie*, most of which had been filmed during the tour of Australia in March. Furthermore, Agnetha was pregnant with her and Björn's second child. This meant that she needed a lot of rest and couldn't take part in the recording sessions to the extent that was needed if the album should be completed before the end of the year. *ABBA – The Movie* was scheduled for release in December, and the plan was that the album would be issued around the same time.

With a lot of hard work the band actually managed to meet the deadline in Scandinavia, where the LP was released just a few weeks before the end of the year – and one week after the birth of Björn and Agnetha's son Christian. But because of all the production demands of manufacturing hundreds of thousands of albums, the rest of the world had to wait until the beginning of 1978 before *ABBA – The Album* reached their local record shops. The worldwide release of the LP coincided with the second single to be issued from the sessions, *Take A Chance On Me*. Björn got the inspiration for the title on a jogging round, when the rhythmic phrase "t-k-ch" started running around in his

head. The phrase turned into the words "take a chance," and from that basic line the rest of the lyrics took shape.

Along with the new album, *Take A Chance On Me* became a success all over the planet. In USA, it was the single that spearheaded a major promotional campaign for ABBA in the spring of 1978. As a result, the song reached number three on the chart, making it the group's best-placed American single with the exception of the chart topper *Dancing Queen*. In terms of pure sales and other statistics, however, *Take A Chance On Me* has actually proved to be the most successful of all ABBA singles in the United States. *ABBA – The Album*, meanwhile, was a major hit album internationally in 1978. Apart from the mini-musical songs and the hit singles, the LP offered gems like *One Man, One Woman*, arguably one of Frida's best vocal performances during the ABBA years. The song was yet another track characterized by an American soft rock feel. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the album became ABBA's best placed LP on the US charts.

ABBA – The Album was one of the group's most ambitious projects, and *The Girl With The Golden Hair* pointed towards Björn and Benny's musical career after ABBA. But for now, they were devoting most of their energy to straightforward pop music. Only a month or two after the international release of *ABBA – The Album* they were back in the studio working on their next hit-filled LP. ■

An alternate shot from the original inner sleeve session for ABBA – The Album. ►





01 Eagle

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvén)
Universal/Union Songs AB

They came flyin' from far away,
Now I'm under their spell
I love hearing the stories that they tell
They've seen places beyond my land,
And they've found new horizons
They speak strangely but I understand
And I dream I'm an eagle
And I dream I can spread my wings
Flyin' high, high, I'm a bird in the sky
I'm an eagle that rides on the breeze
High, high, what a feeling to fly
Over mountains and forests and seas
And to go anywhere that I please
As all good friends we talk all night,
And we fly wing to wing
I have questions and they know everything
There's no limit to what I feel,
We climb higher and higher
Am I dreamin' or is it all real
Is it true I'm an eagle
Is it true I can spread my wings
Flying high, high, I'm a bird in the sky
(I'm an eagle)
I'm an eagle that rides on the breeze
High, high, what a feeling to fly
(What a feeling)
Over mountains and forests and seas
And to go anywhere that I please
And I dream I'm an eagle

And I dream I can spread my wings
Flying high, high, I'm a bird in the sky
(I'm an eagle)
I'm an eagle that rides on the breeze
High, high, what a feeling to fly
(What a feeling)
Over mountains and forests and seas
Flying high, high, I'm a bird in the sky
(I'm an eagle)
I'm an eagle that rides on the breeze
High, high, what a feeling to fly
(What a feeling)
Over mountains and forests and seas
And to go anywhere that I please

02 Take A Chance On Me

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvén)
Universal/Union Songs AB

If you change your mind, I'm the first in line
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
If you need me, let me know, gonna be around
If you got no place to go when you're feeling down
If you're all alone when the pretty birds have flown
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
Gonna do my very best and it ain't no lie
If you put me to the test, if you let me try
Take a chance on me
(That's all I ask of you honey)
Take a chance on me
We can go dancing, we can go walking,

As long as we're together
Listen to some music, maybe just talking,
Get to know you better
'cause you know I've got
So much that I wanna do,
When I dream I'm alone with you
It's magic
You want me to leave it there, afraid of a love affair
But I think you know
That I can't let go
If you change your mind, I'm the first in line
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
If you need me, let me know, gonna be around
If you've got no place to go, if you're feeling down
If you're all alone when the pretty birds have flown
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
Gonna do my very best and it ain't no lie
If you put me to the test, if you let me try
Take a chance on me
(Come on, give me a break will you)
Take a chance on me
Oh you can take your time baby,
I'm in no hurry, know I'm gonna get you
You don't wanna hurt me, baby don't worry,
I ain't gonna let you
Let me tell you now
My love is strong enough to last when things are rough
It's magic
You say that I waste my time,
But I can't get you off my mind
No I can't let go





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'cos I love you so
If you change your mind, I'm the first in line
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
If you need me, let me know, gonna be around
If you've got no place to go, if you're feeling down
If you're all alone when the pretty birds have flown
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
Gonna do my very best, baby can't you see
Gotta put me to the test, take a chance on me
(Take a chance, take a chance, take a chance on me)
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me
Gonna do my very best, baby can't you see
Gotta put me to the test, take a chance on me
(Take a chance, take a chance, take a chance on me)
Honey I'm still free
Take a chance on me

03 One Man, One Woman

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvåus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

No smiles, not a single word at the breakfast table
Though I would have liked to begin
So much that I wanna say, but I feel unable
You leave and you slam the door
Like you've done many times before
And I cry and I feel so helpless
One man, one woman
Two friends and two true lovers
Somehow we'll help each other through the hard times

One man, one woman
One life to live together
One chance to take that never comes back again
You and me, to the end
Outside I can see the sun through the open window
Inside everything feels so cold
What's wrong, what is happening,
Where did all our love go
Sometimes when I just can't cope
I cling to a desperate hope
And I cry and I feel like dying
One man, one woman
Two friends and two true lovers
Somehow we'll help each other through the hard times
One man, one woman
One life to live together
One chance to take that never comes back again
You and me, to the end
Daydreams of a better life, but I have to wake up
The sound of a key in the door
You smile and I realise that we need a shake-up
Our love is a precious thing
Worth the pain and the suffering
And it's never too late for changing
One man, one woman
Two friends and two true lovers
Somehow we'll help each other through the hard times
One man, one woman
One life to live together
One chance to take that never comes back again
You and me, to the end
You and me, to the end

04 The Name Of The Game

(B. Andersson/S. Anderson/B. Ulvåus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

I've seen you twice, in a short time
Only a week since we started
It seems to me, for every time
I'm getting more open-hearted
I was an impossible case
No one ever could reach me
But I think I can see in your face
There's a lot you can teach me
So I wanna know
What's the name of the game
Does it mean anything to you
What's the name of the game
Can you feel it the way I do
Tell me please, 'cause I have to know
I'm a bashful child, beginning to grow
And you make me talk
And you make me feel
And you make me show
What I'm trying to conceal
If I trust in you, would you let me down
Would you laugh at me
If I said I care for you
Could you feel the same way too
I wanna know
The name of the game
I have no friends, no one to see
And I am never invited
Now I am here, talking to you
No wonder I get excited

Filming scenes for ABBA – The Movie in Stockholm with actor Robert Hughes. ►





Your smile, and the sound of your voice
And the way you see through me
Got a feeling, you give me no choice
But it means a lot to me
So I wanna know
What's the name of the game
(Your smile and the sound of your voice)
Does it mean anything to you
(Got a feeling you give me no choice)
But it means a lot, what's the name of the game
(Your smile and the sound of your voice)
Can you feel it the way I do
Tell me please, 'cause I have to know
I'm a bashful child, beginning to grow
And you make me talk
And you make me feel
And you make me show
What I'm trying to conceal
If I trust in you, would you let me down
Would you laugh at me, if I said I care for you
Could you feel the same way too
I wanna know
Oh yes I wanna know
The name of the game
(It was an impossible case)
Does it mean anything to you
(But I think I can see in your face)
That it means a lot
What's the name of the game
(Your smile and the sound of your voice)
Can you feel it the way I do
(Got a feeling you give me no choice)
But it means a lot, what's the name of the game

(It was an impossible case)
Does it mean anything to you
(But I think I can see in your face)
That it means a lot

05 Move On

(B. Andersson/S. Anderson/B. Ulvaeus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

They say a restless body can hide a peaceful soul
A voyager and a settler, they both have a distant goal
If I explore the heavens, or if I search inside
Well, it really doesn't matter as long as I can tell myself
I've always tried
Like a roller in the ocean, life is motion
Move on
Like a wind that's always blowing, life is flowing
Move on
Like the sunrise in the morning, life is dawning
Move on
How I treasure every minute
Being part of it, being in it
With the urge to move on
I've travelled every country,
I've travelled in my mind
It seems we're on a journey,
A trip through space and time
And somewhere lies the answer
To all the questions why
What really makes the difference
Between all dead and living things, the will to stay alive
Like a roller in the ocean
Life is motion

Move on
Like a wind that's always blowing
Life is flowing
Move on
Like the sunrise in the morning
Life is dawning
Move on
How I treasure every minute
Being part of it
Being in it
With the urge to move on
The morning breeze that ripples the surface of the sea
The crying of the seagulls that hover over me
I see it and I hear it
But how can I explain
The wonder of the moment
To be alive, to feel the sun that follows every rain
Like a roller in the ocean
Life is motion
Move on
Like a wind that's always blowing
Life is flowing
Move on
Like the sunrise in the morning
Life is dawning
Move on
How I treasure every minute
Being part of it
Being in it
With the urge to move on

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06 Hole In Your Soul

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvaeus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

You feel bad, let me tell you, we all get the blues
Sometimes life is a burden, way down in your shoes
When it's bad, worse, worst
(And when you're feeling so bad)
And you think you're cursed
(And you've got it sad)
Well, if there's one thing for the better,
That can turn you loose
It's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
My friend Sam is a chauffeur, Annie goes to school
Jerry works at the office, Sue lies by the pool
But on all weekends
(Together again)
When I meet my friends
(I'm gonna see them now)
And we're lookin' 'round for the action,
We sure play it cool
It's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
You paint your world and use all colours
And then you find it all comes out too bright
You know it's only a lie
The songs you sing are too romantic
And when you want the truth

They only spit in your eye
Oh yeah, they're only tellin' you lies
Oh yeah, there's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
You feel bad, let me tell you, we all get the blues
Sometimes life is a burden, way down in your shoes
When it's bad, worse, worst
(You know you're feeling so bad)
And you think you're cursed
(Ain't it kind of sad)
Well, if there's one thing for the better,
That can turn you loose
It's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul
There's gotta be rock'n roll
To fill the hole in your soul

07 Thank You For The Music

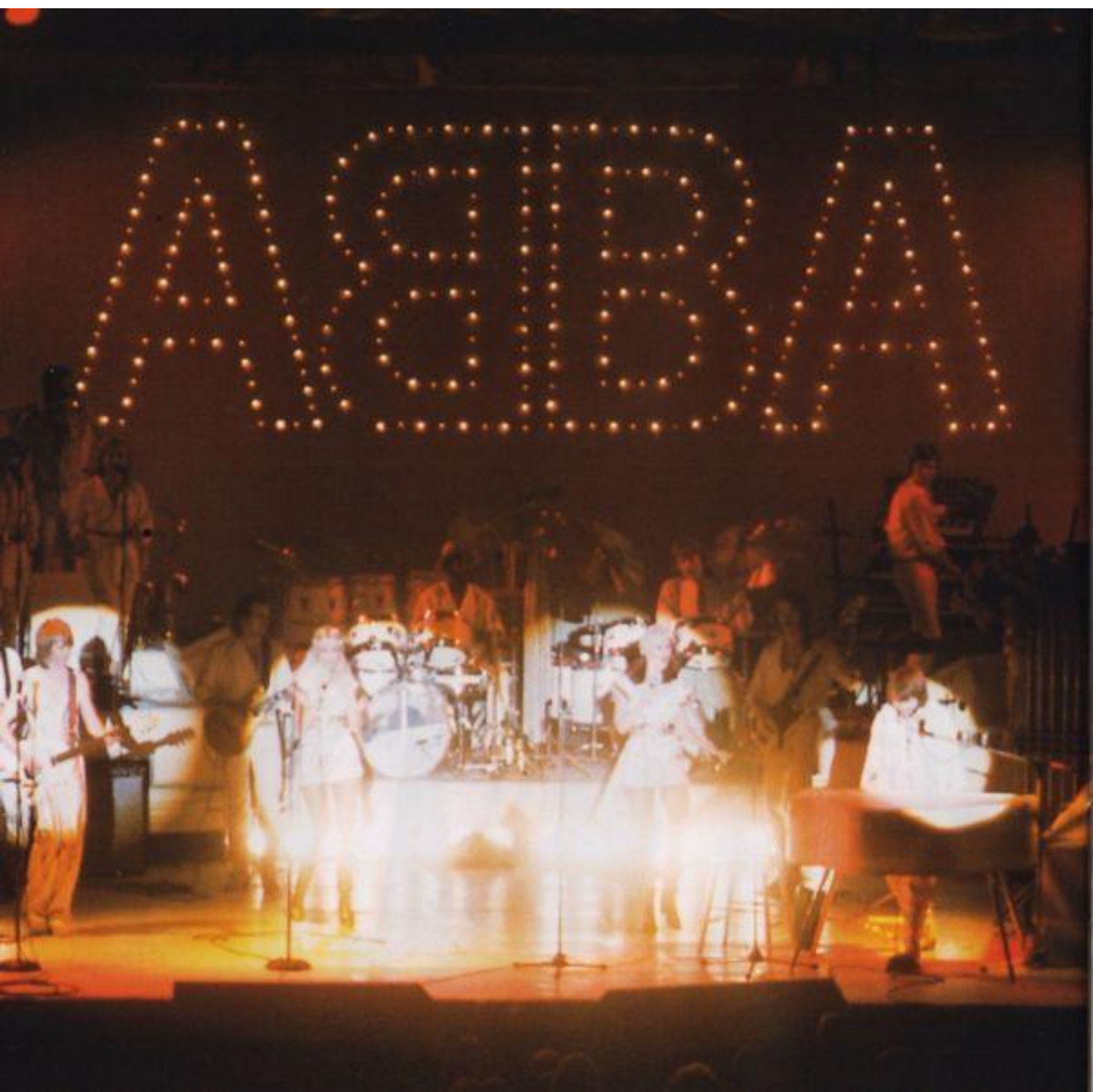
(B. Andersson/B. Ulvaeus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

I'm nothing special, in fact I'm a bit of a bore
If I tell a joke, you've probably heard it before

But I have a talent, a wonderful thing
'cause everyone listens when I start to sing
I'm so grateful and proud
All I want is to sing it out loud
So I say
Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing
Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty
What would life be
Without a song or a dance what are we
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me
Mother says I was a dancer before I could walk
She says I began to sing long before I could talk
And I've often wondered, how did it all start
Who found out that nothing can capture a heart
Like a melody can
Well, whoever it was, I'm a fan
So I say
Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing
Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty
What would life be
Without a song or a dance what are we
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me
I've been so lucky, I am the girl with golden hair
I wanna sing it out to everybody
What a joy, what a life, what a chance!
Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing
Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty
What would life be

Posing in the photo studio, Summer 1977. ►





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Without a song or a dance what are we
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me

08 I Wonder (Departure)

(B. Andersson/S. Andersson/B. Ulvåus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

This park and these houses
Old streets I have walked
Everything dear
Will it be here
One day when I am returning
My friends will get married
Have children and homes
It sounds so nice
Well-planned and wise
Never expecting surprises
I wonder
It's frightening
Leaving now
Is that the right thing
I wonder
It scares me
But who the hell am I
If I don't even try
I'm not a coward
Oh no, I'll be strong
One chance in a lifetime
Yes, I will take it
It can't go wrong
My friends and my family
This dull little town

Buses I've missed
Boys that I've kissed
Everything old and familiar
I wonder
It's frightening
Leaving now is that the right thing
I wonder
It scares me
But who the hell am I
If I don't even try
I'm not a coward
Oh no, I'll be strong
One chance in a lifetime
Yes I will take it
Yes I will take it
It can't go wrong

09 I'm A Marionette

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvåus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

You're so free
That's what everybody's telling me
Yet I feel I'm like an outward-bound,
Pushed around, refugee
Something's wrong, got a feeling that I don't belong
As if I have come from outer space,
Out of place, like King Kong
I'm a marionette, just a marionette, pull the string
I'm a marionette, everybody's pet, just as long as I sing
I'm a marionette, see my pirouette, 'round and 'round
I'm a marionette, I'm a marionette, just a silly old clown
Like a doll, like a puppet with no will at all

And somebody taught me how to talk,
How to walk, how to fall
Can't complain, I've got no one but myself to blame
Something's happening I can't control,
Lost my hold, it's insane
I'm a marionette, just a marionette, pull the string
I'm a marionette, everybody's pet, just as long as I sing
I'm a marionette, see my pirouette, 'round and 'round
I'm a marionette, I'm a marionette, just a silly old clown
Look this way, just a little smile, is what they say
You look better on the photograph if you laugh,
That's okay!
I'm a marionette, just a marionette, pull the string
I'm a marionette, everybody's pet, just as long as I sing
I'm a marionette, see my pirouette, 'round and 'round
I'm a marionette, I'm a marionette, just a silly old clown
You're so free
That's what everybody's telling me
Yet I feel I'm like an outward-bound,
Pushed around, refugee

10 Thank You For The Music (Doris Day Version)

(B. Andersson/B. Ulvåus)
Universal/Union Songs AB

Credits

Musicians: Bass: Rutger Gunnarsson. Drums: Ola Brunkert (on *Take A Chance On Me*, *One Man, One Woman* and *Thank You For The Music*: Roger Palm). Lead guitar: Lasse Wellander (on *Eagle*: Janne Schaffer). Other guitars: Björn Ulvaeus and Lasse Wellander. All keyboards: Benny Andersson. Percussion: Malando Gassama. Saxophones and flutes: Lars O. Carlsson. String arrangements: Rutger Gunnarsson. On the Doris Day version of *Thank You For The Music*: Keyboards: Benny Andersson. Acoustic guitar: Björn Ulvaeus. Electric guitar: Janne Schaffer. Bass: Rutger Gunnarsson. Drums: Ola Brunkert.

Produced and arranged by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. Engineered by Michael B. Tretow. Recorded and mixed at Marcus Music and Metroome Studio. *The Name Of The Game* mixed at Bohus Studio. Additional overdubs recorded at Glen Studio.

Cover illustrations by Rune Söderqvist and Björn Andersson. Booklet photos by Karlsson/Pressens Bild, Hasse Persson/Pressens Bild, Ola Lager/Polar Music, Int'l, Bengt H. Malmqvist/Premium Publishing, © Barry Levine, licensed through Studio Chikara, Lars Larsson/Pressens Bild, Polar Music Int'l, Sjöberg Classic, Pressens Bild. Master tape photo by Tomas Finger. Original art direction by Rune Söderqvist. Art direction and redesign 2001 by Fredrik Hurtig/802. New liner notes 2001 by Carl Magnus Palm, with thanks to Ian Cole and Trent Nickson. Remastered 2001 by Jon Astley with Michael B. Tretow. Reissue supervised by Marko Söderström. Reissue project coordinators: Jeanette Andersson and Margareta Lundström. Thanks to Görel Hanser and Carol Benny.

Backstage on tour. ►

